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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330
Letter No. 2568

July 24, 1992

FLAVR SAVR -- Calgene, Inc., has asked USDA to let it grow its bio-engineered "Flavr Savr" tomato with no further USDA permits. Calgene has also asked the Food and Drug Administration to consider this tomato food, just like any other tomato. "Flavr Savr" was genetically engineered to turn off a gene involved in ripening, thereby extending the fruit's shelf life. It can be harvested at a more mature stage, packed and shipped long distances and still keep for several days before becoming soft. Since this is the first petition of its type, USDA is opening up a comment period until Aug. 28 on the issue, says Terry Medley, director of biotechnology, biologics and environmental protection for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Contact: Amichai Heppner (301) 436-5222.

DOOR PRIZES EAT SPURGE -- The 60 lucky winners of door prizes given out at a workshop in Bozeman, Mont., recently were ecstatic -- each got 600 insects to take back to their home communities. "There aren't just any insects," says Chuck Quimby a plant physiologist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service. "They're tiny *Aphthona flava* beetles that feed on leafy spurge and will help suppress this noxious weed." Quimby helped organize the workshop, sponsored by federal and Montana organizations, to teach 130 land managers and weed experts how to give the beetles their best shot at surviving and reproducing on leafy spurge weeds. Leafy spurge invaded the United States from overseas in 1827. Without natural enemies to control it here, the infested area doubles about every ten years. It's ranked as one of the worse weeds in the Northern Great Plains and Canada and is now appearing as far south as Arizona and New Mexico. Contact: Chuck Quimby (406) 994-6850.

FARM SAFETY DANGER -- Five women in New York have been scalped and/or suffered severe facial disfigurement because their hair got entangled in hay balers. The Centers for Disease Control's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has recounted the details of four of the incidents, which involved a secondary driveline which powers bale throwers on hay balers manufactured by New Holland in the early 1970's. Although the models are no longer manufactured, an unknown number remain in use. In all four cases detailed by CDC, the victims did not shut down the machine before dismounting their tractors. Shutting down the machinery is a vital safety practice. Contact: NIOSH (800) 35-NIOSH.

PHONE BOOK IS HOT OFF THE PRESS -- The 1992 USDA Telephone Directory has finally been printed and we have copies available for the media. To get a copy, contact: Marci Hilt (202) 720-4330. Media ONLY, please.

EXERCISE -- A KEY TO SLOWING AGING -- The secret to staying youthful doesn't lie in wrinkle creams or surgery. In fact, slowing down the aging process is within the grasp of most Americans. "The quality of life is enhanced through continued exercise," says Extension nutritionist **Beth Reames** of the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center. Scientists at USDA's Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University report those who exercise throughout life usually have better health and maintain independence longer than those who don't exercise. **Contact: Beth Reames (504) 388-4141.**

U.S.- CANADA MEAT INSPECTION -- USDA and its Canadian counterpart, Agriculture Canada, have developed a plan to make their meat and poultry import re-inspection systems more comparable to one another, Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** says. "In the spirit of the U.S.-Canadian Free Trade Agreement, we are going to make our import re-inspection systems more equivalent while maintaining our high standards of consumer protection," Madigan says. **Contact: Jim Greene (202) 720-0314.**

WHEAT PROTEIN ANALYSIS -- USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service says that effective immediately, near-infrared transmittance (NIRT) instruments may be used to determine wheat protein in the national grain inspection system. According to **John C. Foltz**, administrator of the agency, this change will reduce the time needed to conduct, as well as improve the accuracy of, official protein determinations. **Contact: Dana Stewart (202) 720-5091.**

LIU APPOINTED -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** has appointed **Michael M.F. Liu** as deputy assistant secretary of agriculture for natural resources and environment. Liu has been serving as the deputy under secretary for USDA's Small Community and Rural Development. In addition, he served as acting administrator for USDA's Rural Electrification Administration. From 1980 through 1982 and 1984 through 1990, Liu was a member of the Hawaii House of Representatives. A native of Honolulu, Liu received his bachelor's degree from Stanford University and his law degree from the William Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawaii. **Contact: Roger Runnigen (202) 720-4623.**

LOANED EXECUTIVE PROGRAM -- USDA is looking for a few good men and women for its Loaned Executive Program, part of the USDA's technical assistance package for the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. Under the program, a variety of U.S. agribusiness companies will team up with USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service to provide direct, hands-on expertise to newly privatized food industries in the former Soviet Union. "A unique feature of this program is the role of the U.S. agribusiness community," says **R. Randall Green**, deputy under secretary of agriculture for international affairs and commodity programs. Initially, the program will place small teams in Novosibirsk, Russia; Minsk, Belarus; and Alma Ata, Kazakhstan. **Contact: Lynn K. Goldsbrough (202) 720-3930.**

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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1833 -- On this edition of Agriculture USA, Maria Bynum takes a look at the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Md. Librarians are looking at new ways to preserve this important collection. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1315 -- USDA reaches out to Native Americans; high tech fire fighting; picking the best melon; fat and your blood; the biggest consumer rip-offs. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1824 -- USDA News Highlights; comments sought on milk marketing; agribanks doing well; marketing herbs; the promise of tropical corn. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1530 -- New fatty acid source; new way to use whey; good use for bad molds; neem is a natural; darkness test. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Mon., Aug. 3, horticultural exports; Tues., Aug. 4, weather and crop update; Wed., Aug. 5, dairy products; Mon., Aug. 10, vegetable production report. (These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newslines carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.)

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- Debbie Janifer reports on the national poultry improvement plan; Pat O'Leary reports on the secrets of soil and earthworms and Lynn Wyvill reports on a volunteer program of master gardeners.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA meteorologist Norton Strommen on the latest weather and crop developments; USDA director of import inspection Mark Manis on U.S./Canada plan for meat and poultry import re-inspection changes; USDA economist Jim Hauver on poultry marketing; USDA economist Steve MacDonald on U.S. agricultural trade and USDA analyst James O'Meara on USDA's loaned executive program for the former Soviet Union.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Debbie Janifer reports on urban gardening; Pat O'Leary reports on a demonstration project on conservation farming and Lynn Wyvill reports on a good year for apple growers.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update, five minutes of USDA farm program information in "news desk" format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

CONTINUED DROUGHT IN IDAHO...is making the potential for fire very high. **Mike Tracy** (Idaho Farm Bureau, Pocatello) says 1992 will likely be the worst fire season on record.

TWO-CYLINDER CLUB EXPO...held in Waterloo, Iowa, was the location of the "Noon Show," and "U.S. Farm Report." **Orion Samuelson** broadcast the programs from the site July 10 and 11. Nearly 700 restored John Deere tractors dating from 1914 to 1960 were displayed at the Expo.

DETAILED...USDA R-TV's director of media liaison **Marci Hilt**, for six months, to USDA's Office of Agricultural Biotechnology, where she will establish the office's public information program to provide accurate, objective information on the science, use, benefit, risk and regulatory safeguards of agricultural biotechnology. New number after Aug. 1 is (703) 235-4419.

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ETHANOL RALLY...in Peoria, Ill., was covered by **Brent Cords** (WSDR, Sterling, Ill.) using on-site stringers. Brent says his area of the state was well represented at the rally.

THANKS...for the feedback from **Taylor Brown** (Northern Ag Network, Billings, Mont.), **Curt Lancaster** (VSA Network, San Angelo, Texas) and **Valeria Parks** (ABN Network, Columbus, Ohio) regarding the 1992 NAFB Washington Ag Watch program. We appreciate the positive observations and comments.

UPDATE...on **Jim Johnson** (USDA Radio & TV chief, retired). Jim says he tries not to be so busy that he would be in danger of wandering out of his enjoyable rut. He writes a newsletter for the Salem, Ore., Gardener Club, occasionally sells books with his brother, and whacks a golf ball around the course nearly every day, keeping his game sharp.


VIC POWELL

Chief, Radio and TV Division